

New Cutting Area for 2009 Two Bar – Pinyon / Juniper Removal Project

Thanks for your interest in the Pinyon / Juniper Removal Project. Dedicated Hunters have already saved the Division thousands of dollars on the cuttings done in the Rabbit Gulch area. Now we are ready to move to a new site called the Two Bar. Designed to enhance deer and elk winter range, this project removes young pinyon and juniper trees (P/J) that are encroaching into a preferred foraging area. For 2009, biologists have asked Dedicated Hunters to target the pinyon / juniper less than 8-10 inches in diameter from a ridge in the Trail Hollow area. (see maps and driving instructions).

The Tabby Mountain foothills are a critical wintering area for elk, deer and other wildlife. Over the years, there has been a considerable amount of habitat work done to enhance this area for wildlife. This project joins numerous chainings, lop and scatter (tree cutting) and reseeding projects designed to promote shrub, forbs and grass growth to improve watershed conditions and to provide winter forage for deer and elk.

Throughout most of the old chained areas and areas with sagebrush and other plants critical to winter survival, P/J trees are rapidly invading. As the trees grow larger and more abundant, they consume more water and nutrients making them unavailable for shrubs and understory plants such as grasses and forbs. Within another 30 to 50 years, this valuable winter range will become a mature P/J forest, which will contain little or no understory vegetation. In short: little forage = few mule deer or elk.

To protect the forage on these deer and elk winter ranges we have a few options: burning, chemical treatment, chaining and physical (tree-by-tree) removal. Prescribed burns and chemicals kill trees but also kill the shrubs so we lose forage values. Chaining protects more shrubs but would give only marginal results in an area being invaded by small trees. The younger trees are flexible and bend under the chain, thus only a few older trees would actually be uprooted. In addition, chemical, chaining and fire treatments can be politically sensitive and are expensive.

With tight budgets, physical removal seems to be the best option currently available. Dedicated hunters and other volunteers played a major role in the rehabilitation of the Rabbit Gulch chaining. Not only have they removed thousands of pinyon and juniper trees, the money saved by not chaining or paying a contractor to do the work has allowed the Division to take on new projects. Several of these are within a few miles of Rabbit Gulch on both sides of Highway 208 where the DWR has chained or cut old sagebrush and P/J.

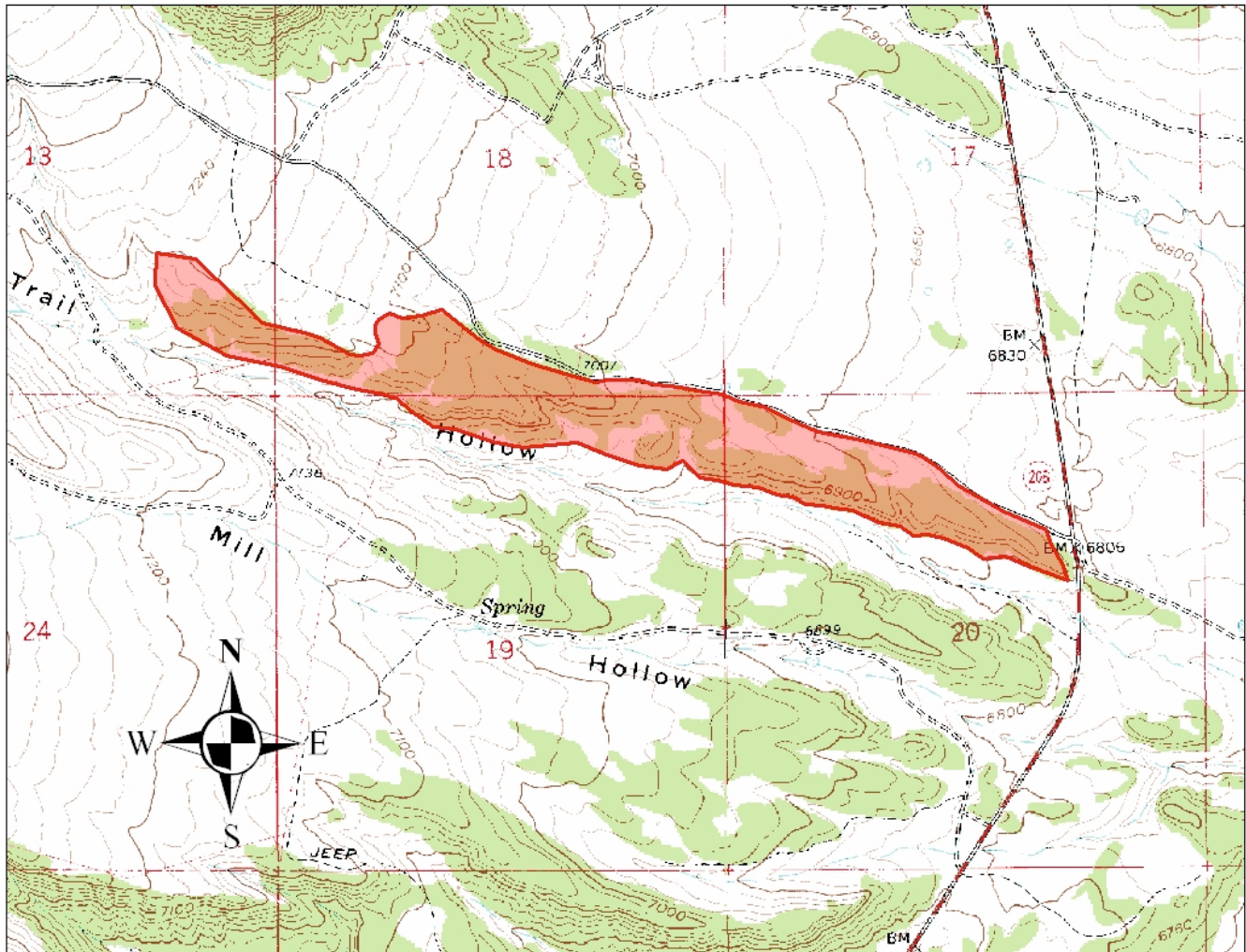
The Two Bar begins a new phase in the enhancement efforts. The biologists have asked dedicated hunters to thin out one-third of the pinyon / juniper trees less than 8 - 10 inches in diameter in the woodland bordering Trail Hollow. This is a major change to previous work as the UDWR asked for complete removal of the small trees in Rabbit Gulch.

Two Bar (Trail Hollow project):

The 2009 removal area, marked in red, is most easily accessed from the north side (see map below). To reach the site, follow Highway 40 to Highway 208 [also called the Golden Stairs Road or the Tabiona cut-off. Turn north on 208 and go passed mile marker 6 or roughly 6.5 miles. The cutting area is a narrow forested ridge, which the road crosses in a left curve. Access

the cutting area on the north side through a UDWR gate. This gate, on the west side of the road, is easily recognizable as it is the only UDWR roadside gate in this area with a cattle guard.

Park along the road and walk to the trees to avoid ripping up the winter range we are trying to enhance.



Rules, Regulations and Helpful Hints:

Suggestions:

- 1) Map - the USGS Duchesne 1:100,000 map is useful to reach the site and shows the entire area.
- 2) Vehicles are restricted to the main existing roads. Please park along the road itself, do not drive off or follow the small two tracks. This area is a critical winter range and the fewer roads the better. Do not take 4-wheelers or other off-road vehicles off the existing (main) roads.
- 3) Cut only the pinyon and juniper. Other trees and bushes are much scarcer and have more values for wildlife. Cut every third tree under 8-10 inches. If larger trees are in the area, target the smaller trees. A **chainsaw is recommended but not required**. An axe, Pulaski (ax/flat pick combo), handsaw, clippers or shovel may make removing the smaller trees and branches

easier. Spare blades and possibly an extra saw are also recommended.

4) Cut trees off within two inches of the ground and remove all limbs and pine needles below the cut. If any branches or anything green is left on the stump, the tree will continue to grow and eventually one or more branches will become a main trunk.

Notes: Tree shears may help with cutting the remaining branches. It's also easier to work in pairs. One person cuts the tree while the other works as the spotter and helps to hold branches. Another trick is to cut the tree off at knee or waist high, pull it out of the way, and then recut at ground level.

Note: If you do not have an axe or chainsaw, you may still participate. Often other tree cutters miss a green branch while cutting. Someone trailing along behind or scouting through areas where others have cut with a tree shear or small saw can make a valuable contribution by cutting off these branches.

5) Leave the trees where they fall, delimb the trunk [cut off the branches] and cut the branches into three-foot sections. The trunk can remain whole. Removing the branches helps by allowing the tree to settle to the ground and it removes tripping hazards. These fallen trees and branches will also help: a) prevent erosion, b) catch moisture by trapping blowing snow and c) provide valuable microhabitats for small animals and plants.

6) Take as many safety precautions as you can while cutting such as using quality eye wear, gloves, heavy boots, etc. Also, do not go solo; take along someone who can be there in case of an emergency.

7) Pack it in; pack it out. Please take your litter home and leave the area as clean as or cleaner than you found it.

8) Make a plan and stick to it. Tell someone where you are going and when you will return. If you have a cell phone, bring it. Every year search and rescue has to look for someone, increase your chance of being found by giving rescue crews the correct place to look.

9) There are no organized campgrounds or camping areas in this area. Our recommendation would be to stay at Starvation Reservoir, which has a State Park with a camping area, boat ramp and water. It also has some excellent walleye, bass, perch and trout fishing.

10) Take along extra water, food, gas, spare tires, etc. Two Bar (Trail Hollow) is not far from civilization and a main road but it is always good to go prepared for emergencies.

To Receive Dedicated Hunter Credit:

1) Prior to going in the field, pick up a timesheet/volunteer agreement at one of the Division offices, fill in Name and Job Description (Two Bar PJ removal project) and have a Division employee sign them. (The employee's signature, on the DWR authorizing signature line, only activates the insurance policy; it does not make them the project leader. You are your own project leader.) One individual may pick up agreements for everyone who will be involved (including kids over 12). Timesheets are good for two weeks. Note: You may go out at your convenience and I do not need to be informed of when you go.

2) Please record on the timesheet as much information as you can. Include date, total hours

worked, mileage for the driver and equipment used (handsaw, chainsaw, clippers, etc.) Break out drive time from on-site time and write down which is which – I will give credit for both. Plan to stay overnight rather than trying to commute. Drive time can not exceed work time and I will not give credit for driving long distances on consecutive dates. If you have a long drive, you may want to check websites for other regions to find a closer project.

- 3) Take before and after photos of the work done and send a **few** to me. These can be film or digital and either mailed or emailed to me. If you decide to email the photos, please convert them to small files. Photos and information can be emailed (ronstewart@utah.gov); this also helps as a backup and a way for me to contact you if I have questions. A note or a map of where you cut is useful and if you have ideas on how to make the project better, please include those also.
- 4) You may work more than the eight or 16 hours required per year and I recommend getting as many hours as you need as quickly as you can for the entire enrollment period. You never know what will keep you from doing hours next year. I can give Dedicated Hunter credit up to or even beyond the 24 or 40 hours needed during a three-year period but it cannot be applied toward a new DH enrollment nor may I credit hours worked by another individual. You must work your own.
- 5) Send the original timesheets, photos and other information back to Utah Wildlife Resources, Attn: Ron Stewart, 152 East 100 North, Vernal Utah 84078. **I need the original timesheet**, not a copy or email version. The signed, original volunteer agreement/time sheet (of the correct year) is the only way to make it official, so do not forget to mail those to me.
- 6) On some occasions, organized groups such as the Mule Deer Foundation and Boy Scout troops have lead trips to work on this project. This is welcomed and appreciated. Generally, someone is named as the “project leader” and is given extra time sheets and authority to sign.
- 7) After I receive the timesheets and photos, I will enter it in the database. It may take a couple of weeks before it gets entered depending mail services, vacations and other workload.

Note: credit will be given for the hours worked cutting down trees and drive time (within reason). Other time such as eating, fishing, camping, wildlife watching, etc. cannot be considered for credit.



Juniper – scaled leaves



Pinyon Pine – needle shaped leaves

Finally, have some fun! Take along family, friends and make a day or weekend of the event. There is good fishing and camping nearby as well as good places to watch wildlife such as Starvation Reservoir and the Uinta Mountains.

Thank you for considering this project!!